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White Lodging founders win inaugural Will Koch Indiana Tourism Leadership Award

Lt. Governor Skillman recognizes members of the White family for job creation, philanthropy

INDIANAPOLIS – Dean, Barbara, Bruce, and Beth White were honored today as the 2011 recipients of the Will Koch Indiana Tourism Leadership Award. Lt. Governor Skillman joined members of the Koch family to present the award during the annual Hoosier Hospitality Conference.

The new award is named for the late Will Koch, long-time owner and president of Holiday World & Splashin' Safari and chief executive officer of its parent company, Koch Development Corporation. It celebrates and pays tribute to Koch's business and philanthropic achievements through tourism and showcases the important role tourism plays in a diversified economy.

"For more than 25 years, two generations of the White family have invested significant resources to help make Indiana a wonderful place to live and visit," said Lt. Governor Becky Skillman. "Their hard work and strong leadership has created thousands of jobs and positively impacted communities throughout the state."

Founded as Whiteco Industries, Inc. in 1985, White Lodging is a fully integrated owner, developer and manager of premium brand hotels. The company's portfolio has expanded to more than 160 mid-to-large scale hotels in 17 states, including 33 in Indiana. With the recent opening of Marriott Place in Indianapolis, a self-financed project that has already become an iconic fixture in the city's skyline, White Lodging now employs more than 2,500 Hoosiers.

"It is a great honor to receive this recognition," said Bruce White CEO and President, White Lodging. "Will Koch was a visionary leader with a clear passion for his life's work. Like him, we are proud to invest in Indiana."

In addition to their great business accomplishments, the Whites have given generously to various causes. A \$5.5 million gift from the Dean & Barbara White Family Foundation and the Bruce & Beth

White Family Foundation will fund the new Purdue University Calumet White Lodging Center for Hospitality and Tourism Management. White Lodging has also donated funds to establish an Indianapolis chapter of Back on My Feet, a nationwide initiative that helps homeless populations access educational and career development opportunities.

“Dean, Barbara, Bruce and Beth epitomize my brother’s entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to the state of Indiana,” said Dan Koch, the park’s new president. “We are touched by the opportunity to carry on Will’s legacy with the presentation of the inaugural award to the White family.”

Ten Hoosiers were nominated for the 2011 Will Koch Indiana Tourism Leadership Award. A panel of tourism industry officials selected Dean and Barbara and Bruce and Beth White because they excelled at the following qualities:

- Strong leadership and an ability to inspire others;
- Entrepreneurial spirit and willingness to invest in Indiana;
- Commitment to tourism and business development in Indiana;
- Dedication to improve Indiana’s travel and tourism profile; and
- Distinguished service to community.

About Will Koch:

Born and raised in Santa Claus, Koch graduated from Notre Dame University and received his master’s degree from the University of Southern California. Under his leadership, Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari have become an award-winning destination with annual visitation exceeding one million per year. The park’s annual economic impact on Spencer County is estimated at \$161.7 million. Koch also served as president of the Lincoln Boyhood Drama Association, which worked with the State of Indiana to reopen the Lincoln Amphitheatre in 2009 with a new drama honoring the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln’s birth. In addition, he helped initiate and lead a grassroots campaign to “Save Indiana Summers” and address the effects of an ever-earlier school start date. He passed away in June 2010 at age 48.

About Indiana’s tourism industry:

Tourism is a big industry comprised of many small businesses that provide positive and significant contributions to Indiana’s economy. Annual spending from more than 62 million visitors exceeds \$10 billion in Indiana. The industry generates more than \$1 billion in local and state tax collections from visitor expenditures. It also creates one in 10 jobs and employs approximately 257,000 Hoosiers.

Lt. Governor Becky Skillman oversees the Indiana Office of Tourism Development. Amy Vaughan serves as the agency’s Director.